The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 162. DECEMBER, 1920. PRICE THREE HALFPENCE. 2s. per annum post free.

Contents.

	PAGE
Notes of the Month	1
The Coming Reformation: By Dr. John Campbell	3
The Lambeth Appeal: The Two Creeds	5
The Present Task of our Church ..	6
Memorial Notice: Miss E. N. Orr	8
To Thine Own Self be True ..	8
U. H. M. C.	9
Lesson Notes	9
Reports:—Unity Guild; Clough; Comber; Crumlin; Downpatrick; Holywood; Mountpottinger; Larne; Newry; Raloo; Templepatrick	11
Births	15
Death	15
Books Received	15

Notes of the Month.

On the 19th of October last a meeting of ministers and laymen was called to consider the future of the Magazine in view of the increased cost of production. This cost has gone up to 3½d. per copy, a rise in price which, when the Magazine was started no one could have foreseen. For a period of thirteen and a half years, the deficit, no matter what the amount, has been met through the generosity of our friend Dr. John Campbell. The thanks of all readers and supporters are due to him for the fact that we have been enabled to carry on so long. But, under present abnormal conditions, it was felt that it was not quite just to expect of one man that he should bear alone the burden of an ever-increasing deficit. The meeting referred to was an excellent one as regards attendance, and a unanimous desire was expressed for the continuation of the magazine. At the same time it was realised that to ensure continuity greater co-operation on the part of all the churches would be urgently needed. It will be necessary to increase the charge to 2d. from 1st January, 1921, but even this it will be seen will not cover much more than half the cost. The business manager—Rev. G. J. Slipper—will be thankful to all friends who when paying their annual subscriptions will remember to pay 2/6 instead of 2/-, and he will be grateful to individuals and to congregations for annual donations to assist him in the carrying on of this needful work. The Magazine will pass under new control, and Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., has kindly consented to act as Editor. An Editorial Board, to assist Mr. Rossington, has been formed, and this Board takes over all responsibility, financial and otherwise. The new management deserves every support, and the wish of the present Editor, who is grateful for the sustained efforts of many friends and helpers in the past, is, that that support may be forthcoming and that the Magazine may continue on its useful course.

The idea that there should be a union of the larger Protestant denominations still attracts much attention. It is interesting to read what is said in favour of such an attractive proposition, though the great failure of the early Roman Catholic Church to achieve such an ideal cannot be lost sight of. The Protestant Primate of Ireland lately dwelt at some length on the matter. "He thanked God that at last they had a definite pronouncement from the Church authority which the Church of their communion possessed—that every one who believed in Jesus Christ and was baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity was just as truly as each one of them a member of the Universal Church."

* *

The Primate has not yet grasped the fact that the teaching of Jesus is the one and only important thing for the Christian. To make any baptismal formula the test of a man's Christianity is to dethrone the teaching of Jesus.

He then goes on to outline a plan by which the various denominations may be brought into some sort of union. "The framework was as follows:—First, the Holy Scripture as the ultimate standard and Nicene Creed as a sufficient statement of faith; second, the true Sacrament ordained by Christ, baptism and holy communion; third, a ministry acknowledged by all."

In this framework there is no indication that different parts of Holy Scripture have very different values or that the teaching of Jesus transcends all other portions of Holy Scripture, and has an importance far above that of any other record in the Old and New Testament. "A Ministry acknowledged by all" has attractions, but it will not necessarily improve the lives of men.

* *

The framework is defective in the most important item which the follower of Jesus can contemplate. It omits all reference to the teaching of Jesus as the one thing needful. The Nicene Creed, to which the Primate attaches much importance, contains not a word about the teaching of Jesus, and has but an indirect, if any, moral value. This plan is not likely to do much good to the human race. Any plan of union which fails to put devotion to the teaching of Jesus in the fore-front will miss the mark. It will not make a world of purer and better men and women. A theological system merely tinged with the teaching of Jesus will not do the work. It has been tried and has lamentably failed. Men need the teaching of Jesus to be kept before them pure and undisguised, and that is what the Non-Subscribing Church exists for.

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Armistice Day proved, as we expected, an occasion of very solemn and impressive significance both at home and abroad. The period of silence seems everywhere to have been observed in spirit and in deed. We have received a very graphic description of the celebrations in Paris, as communicated by a Belfast young lady now studying in Paris. She particularly felt the impressiveness of the passing of the massed French Flags which had been in German possession since the war of 1870-71, but were recently restored to France. They made a tremendous emotional appeal to the great concourse of spectators who witnessed the march past of troops and colours. No less impressive to our Irish eye-witness must have seemed that part of the celebration when Marshal Foch, the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied troops, stood alone at the salute before the mortal remains of the unknown French soldier, forming the centre and symbol of the ceremonial. Nor was the scene at Westminster less appealing and impressive, and London has seldom in the course of its eventful history witnessed more wonderful sights than those which on November 11th, and on later days, centred in the Cenotaph and Westminster Abbey. The soul of the people was stirred to its depths.

* *

The Laymen's League has been since October an established fact, and already

in Great Britain members are being enrolled and branches or chapters started in the most important centres. The American organisation has done, and is doing, splendid work, and has already justified the faith of its promoters and supporters to the full. The British organisation—"The Unitarian and Free Christian Laymen's League"— to give it its official title, now makes it appeal to our laymen, and we hope the response will be prompt and widespread. Its objects are practical, and we are sure they will commend themselves to our readers. Mr. Charles H. Strong's visit last July created the right impression and elicited the warm interest of some of our own laymen. Hence the latter are already prepared to take up the work of starting a branch or chapter, and in anticipation of the movement there was appointed a Provisional Committee to watch events and take the necessary steps. Doubtless, at the beginning of the New Year, there will be fuller particulars to report, and many of our laymen by then will have determined for themselves to further the movement in every possible way. We wish it the greatest success, and believe it will infuse new life and energy into our community.

* *

Once more the Festival of Christmas is drawing near, not, unfortunately, to find the world yet ready to receive and fitly express its message of Peace and Good-Will. The setting could hardly be less propitious than it is in the case of Ireland. Absolute disregard of the sanctity of human life, cold-blooded murders, more atrocious than were enacted in the war, civil disorder and recurring outbreaks of faction, masquerading under the guise of religion—all these conditions seem inimical to the sounding forth of the Christian appeal. Yet the clear indication how far men have wandered from the true path of human progress and felicity should make us all, with humble and abashed hearts, hear and value as never before the Song of the Angels. For many of us the Christmas season should not be a time of mere rejoicing but a time of re-consecration to a great and imperative crusade for God and man. Not until we all thrill to the message and determine to make it vital in word and deed will its coming accomplish the Divine purpose and set the Christ-child in the midst of our erring and misguided generation.

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All Communications for the January number of this Magazine should be sent to the Editor, Ardeevin, Cadogan Park, Belfast, not later than December 15th. Owing to the Christmas holidays it will be necessary to have the Magazine ready as early as possible.

THE COMING REFORMATION.

By Dr. John Campbell.

The religion taught by Jesus and exemplified in His life has never been popular. The average human being is too selfish and sordid to accept it with heartiness and sincerity. In the early Catholic Church a system of religion, to which the name Christianity is applied, gradually grew up. It was based on the thoughts of Old Testament writers, on the opinions of the Apostle Paul, on the views of the early Roman theologians, and on the life history and teaching of Jesus, and it became the established religion of the Christian world. Unfortunately, no attempt was made to indicate the relative values of the sources from which this early Christianity took its origin. The teaching of Jesus was placed on the same level as that of others, and did not receive the emphasis to which its merits entitled it. While Jesus was exalted as a portion of the Godhead, His actual teaching was not put forward in such a way as to make the common people feel that in it the very essence of Christianity lay. Under the influence of such a system, Christianity largely lost its moral value for the rank and file of mankind, and a reaction set in which culminated in Luther's Protestant

Reformation. Luther's influence was, unfortunately, short-lived. Calvin came on the scene and turned the new current into the old channels. He made certain modifications, but his system remained open to the same objections as the older one had been subject to. It failed to place the teaching of Jesus in a position of exalted and unrivalled superiority. It did more. It so mixed up the teaching of Jesus with the speculations of theologians and the opinions of ancient Jewish Authors and of the Apostle Paul, that the teaching of the Master was quite ove shadowed by them, and the people got a confused and erroneous idea of what the real follower of Christ had to keep before him. This condition of things still exists. Even in modern aspirations towards Christian unity, the prelates have failed to grasp the fact that allegiance to the teaching of Jesus is the hall-mark of the Christian, rather than a baptismal formula or belief in a particular dogma.

A few years ago, only the few who had the opportunity of seeing beneath the surface of human life, realised how much the teaching of Jesus was needed to reform the world. Only a very few recognised the dire consequences which disregard of the teaching of Jesus was producing. Latterly, circumstances have brought about a wider interest in the moral welfare of humanity. Government departments and corporate civic bodies, as well as private individuals, have been awakened to to the fact that much preventible evil exists, that much needless suffering is a daily experience and is so common as to be regarded as normal, and that remedies must be sought for without delay. Unhappily, the great remedy is lost sight of. The teaching of Jesus is not being advocated as the sovereign remedy for the prevention and cure of most of the evils which afflict mankind.

By many Christianity is regarded as a failure, and the moral degradation of to-day is brought forward as evidence of its failure. When the earnest devotion with which the clergy of orthodox churches, assisted by their Sunday School teachers, carry on their work is borne in mind, it is not remarkable that a superficial observer should say that Christianity is a failure, considering how poor the moral result has been. A more careful analysis of the state of matters will show that official Christianity as preached and taught is a very different thing from the teaching of Jesus, and that the teaching of Jesus has never had a proper chance to influence mankind. The great hope of the future lies in the recognition of this fact. Only when the pure and unadulterated teaching of Jesus has been instilled into humanity and has failed to elevate the moral tone of the community can it be said that the real Christianity has failed. We may rest assured that the teaching of Jesus will not fail. It is too true. It appeals too directly to the most selfish and to the most ignorant. It cannot fail if the great churches will unite to give it a chance to work untrammelled, unobscured and undisguised.

Where does the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church stand in regard to the coming Reformation? Its cardinal principle is that allegiance to the teaching of Jesus is the true test of a man's Christianity. This principle separates it from all other denominations. It is the one point which requires to be kept most prominently before our people. Other matters of detail have their place, but that place is a subordinate one. Our ancestors struggled long and hard for freedom. We, like them, must remember that abstract freedom is of but little use unless it promotes the moral and spiritual uplifting of humanity. We glory in our freedom from creed and confession of faith because we desire to give our whole-hearted attention to the teaching of Jesus. It is not enough that this great distinguishing principle of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church should be impressed on our own people, young and old.

It is necessary that the attention of Orthodox Churches should be called to the cause of their moral failure. It is necessary that they should be implored to throw aside all that encumbers them in their work and makes their most earnest efforts ineffectual. The state of moral chaos in which we are at present can only be reduced to order when all denominations unite to promote the teaching of Jesus and that alone.

THE LAMBETH APPEAL

The Two Creeds.

The late Rev. W. T. Reed, a well-known Unitarian minister, was at one time a Baptist missionary in India He had under him native preachers. He found that one of them was teaching the Trinity and not making much distinction between its three persons, and Siva, Vishnu and Brahma. He was teaching the three persons as three aspects of the One Supreme Being. This wouldn't do at all, as it entirely cut the ground from under the theological system which Mr. Reed regarded as orthodoxy, so he felt bound to report this preacher, with the result that the native preacher was dismissed. However, the incident set Mr. Reed thinking on the matter as he had never done before. "How is the Trinity to be explained?" The result was, that having had a man dismissed for heresy and being at a loss to find a better explanation, notwithstanding the appeals of his missionary brethren, he felt bound to surrender his ministry among the Baptists, and after a period in lay life, he found his way to the Unitarians.

Thus, it is not enough for a man to accept the Trinity in order to be orthodox, he must accept it in a certain way. An article in this magazine dealt with the difficulty experienced throughout the centuries in keeping on the tight rope of strict orthodoxy and avoiding falling into Sabellianism, which might describe the heresy of the native preacher, or Tri-theism which meant a worship of three Gods who were yet One.

Dr. Martineau maintained that the Trinity was the least objectionable part of the whole system with its "scheme of salvation," and he himself wrote an article on "The way out of the Trinitarian controversy," but it was not acceptable, the orthodox party considering it a revival of old heresy.

There are many Liberal Christians to-day who teach the doctrine of the Trinity, but their teaching is not that of strict orthodoxy.

A Congregational minister writing recently to the "Christian Life," referred to the requirement in the Lambeth Appeal, that ministers accepting the invitation of the Bishops to be ordained by them, should subscribe to the Nicene and Apostles' Creed, as being designed to keep out Unitarians. It may be so, but Professor James Drummond showed that, even after the first of these creeds had been specially amended in the early centuries for that very purpose, as a barrier it was inadequate. The original strata of both creeds were very short indeed, being little more than a "passing phrase" given with a sign, to admit to the secret meetings of the Christians. He says that the Apostles' Creed is absolutely untrinitarian. Dr. Drummond suggests there is nothing improper or unintelligible in saying "We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and we believe in His sanctifying power in the souls of His children, and also in the Holy Catholic Church, and in the communion of saints, which are united into one Divine brotherhood through His all-pervading Spirit."

If the creed were in that form, perhaps we could all unanimously accept it. Our Congregational friend, however, somewhat misses the mark when he states that the assent to the two creeds is to keep out Unitarians. The primary fact is, that the whole

of the Church called Catholic, including Latin and Greek, uses the Nicene Creed in the service of Eucharist. For a long time the Church of Rome used the Apostles' Creed, but under pressure from the East, as a safeguard against Arianism being brought in by the Goths, adopted the Nicene. The Arian controversy had not troubled Rome. There is a provision made in the Lambeth Report for the alternative use of the filiaque clause, which refers to the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son. This was the rock on which the split between the Greek and Latin Churches took place.

The strong probability is that amongst the philosophically inclined, the nature of God and His modes of manifestation were very much discussed and as it is much easier to be metaphysical than to live the practical life of Christ, in course of time belief became of more paramount importance than the life. Ideas and formulas inherited from religions outside Christianity perhaps helped to build up the creeds.

However, in the Roman Catholic Mass, a definite structure has been built up, very much marred by references to eternal damnation and repeated appeals to be saved from the wrath, but at the same time possessing a framework into which the whole life of Christ can be built, that is to say, a drama from the "fall of man" to the "ascension" is being performed.

Very skilfully from purification, upwards through various emotions, until exercise is given to the intellect by creeds and sermon, preparation is made for the climax in the consecration of the elements.

A comparison of the First and Second Prayer Books of Edward VI. shows how in the second havoc was made with the order of Communion in in the first, the pieces were transposed. It was like shattering the structure over Sir Walter Scott's monument in Edinburgh.

Broad Churchmen would retain the Creeds, either in their present or older forms, until the Church as a whole decides to deal with them. The Lambeth Appeal allows of no compromise, however, the acceptance must be sincere and whole-hearted. There is no invitation to perfect freedom in the interpretation of Scriptures, Creeds and Liturgy. The denial of that intellectual liberty is the vicious point in the setting up of creeds, and so long as it remains we will be Non-Subscribers.

ULLIN.

"THE PRESENT TASK OF OUR CHURCH."

The above question formed the subject of an interesting discussion at a meeting of some of our ministers held in October The occasion was the restarting, at longer intervals, of the Ministers' meetings, suspended for some time owing to difficulties of travelling. Thanks to the hospitality of the Moderator (Rev. G. L. Phelps), who presided over the proceedings, which included tea, the venue was the Shaftesbury Restaurant, Donegall Place, Belfast. There was a good attendance, a testimony to the desire for resumed fraternal relations. The subject for discussion, indicated in the above title, was introduced by the Rev. H. J. Rossington. He emphasised at the outset that our Church shares in the task and responsibility of all churches to-day, for all alike are confronted by facts and factors that make present conditions peculiarly significant and also peculiarly difficult for organised religion. One fact of pre-eminent importance which gave special cause for anxiety was this: Many things, following upon the war, are in a state of flux. We look out upon a scene that is continually changing before our eyes; we survey circumstances and conditions that are themselves incessantly altering. Now the Churches by reason of their very organisation, their deep roots in the past, their stated forms, their settled orders, are fixed,

almost immutable, in some cases often intractable. Yet without the power of adaptation, of accommodation, the problem is insoluble. If, in the case of the Free Churches, there is more hope of finding a solution, even for them the problem is pressing. It may be thus stated: How is the Church of Christ, with all that it stands for, to meet and satisfy the clamant needs of men to-day?

Fortunately, even in the face of a changing order, and despite the mutable and inconstant elements of the situation, there are permanent factors. Such are the main functions of the Church, persisting from age to age, notwithstanding the adoption of varied forms and the proving of differing methods. The three main functions of the abiding Church of Christ are:—

(1) To witness to the unity of man and of his religion.
(2) To be the teacher of Christian ethics.
(3) To bear testimony to the presence and supreme importance of the Unseen.

Whatever may seem to us the special task of our Church it is one with all true churches of Christ in exercising those functions. How admirably they seem adapted for the needs of to-day! Democratic in essence and aim they suit felicitously a period which is nothing if not democratic. Where else, if not in such a church, can we cope with the divisive movements, reconcile the conflicting aims and interests, remove the laxity of moral standards, substitute spiritual values for material and mechanical conceptions of life? To all these undertakings our Church is pledged.

Yet, there is something we need still. Before we can make for unity without we require greater unity within our body. Have we even yet realised in power and appeal the true import of the Church idea? The individualism which is precious and indisputable in matters of conscience, private judgment, personal freedom, is carried to extremes sometimes in other respects. We need greater solidarity, closer cohesiveness. Every minister and every congregation should feel that while doing their own individual work they have behind them the encouragement and the goodwill of the corporate body of the Church.

This sense of oneness, of solidarity, might be strengthened in various ways. The central body might be responsible for leaflets and other forms of literary appeal designed to help the common work of the Church. United services of geographically-grouped congregations could be more frequently held. We all need the feeling, strong and stimulating, of corporate fellowship—the realisation of a common aim that is consecrated and co-operately achieved. Unity is strength, division is weakness. To achieve the former more effectually and fruitfully is our pressing need.

The discussion was opened by the Moderator and contributed to by every minister present. Many valuable suggestions were made, and these may be briefly summarised. Our congregations at their Annual Meetings could invite the Moderator and other representatives of our Non-Subscribing Church. The Annual Meetings of the General Synod might well be rendered more attractive by the fuller discussion of notices of motion bearing upon present-day problems, and by the appointment of special speakers to deal with the same. Laymen and systematic lay preaching could be more utilised in the carrying on of our Church work. Nor should the deepening of the spiritual life of our Church be neglected, since that would supply the motive power for operating the new agencies suggested by several of the speakers. Others felt that our monthly organ, "The Non-Subscribing Magazine," would make for greater unity, if the suggestion to make it the official organ of the Church were approved by the General Synod. Such, also, would be the effect of more frequent opportunities of assembling ourselves together as members of the larger Church. Altogether the discussion covered wide ground and proved exceedingly suggestive and helpful.

MEMORIAL NOTICE.

MISS E. N. ORR.

The little congregation at Clonmel has suffered a serious loss in the death of Miss Orr, who passed away on Monday, November 8th. The funeral took place on the following Wednesday. Revs. A. Amey and W. A. Weatherall officiated at the services held in the house and at the family burial ground in Rathronan churchyard. The mourners included Mr. J. H. Canning, of Larne, and Mr. James Minnis, of Cork. An obituary notice appeared in the "Clonmel Chronicle," and in the "Nationalist," of which the following is the substance: "She is truly great who is great in charity" is perhaps the most fitting sentence in which to introduce a brief but inadequate obituary notice of Miss Elizabeth Nancy Orr. She was the last survivor of a family long connected with the locality, each of whom possessed the spirit of benevolence to a remarkable degree. The deceased lady was twin sister of the late Miss Margaret Orr, and they were the youngest daughters of the late Rev. James Orr, a clergyman of the Unitarian Church, who settled in Clonmel in 1833 from the North of Ireland. Since then the respective members of the family have ever enjoyed the goodwill of the entire community down to the present day. The late Miss Orr was a most amiable and unassuming lady, and developed most refined intellectual tastes. Her life had been a most unselfish one, but she was wise in her generation, having acquired the knowledge that more genuine happiness can be derived from that mode of life than any other. To the surviving relatives we tender sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

A memorial service was held in the Meeting House on Sunday morning, Rev. A. Amey officiating.

TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE.

There is a concensus of opinion that the war has produced changes in the individual life of each one of us, and in the nation, generally. Yet to understand to any extent the *raison d'etre* we think we must take a more distant survey. We must realise the fact that the rapid increase of wealth during the last half century has given rise to the belief that this world's goods are of primary importance regardless of the recognition that true life arises from the desire to possess the blessedness of the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount. To use a common colloquialism, we have loved the fleshpots of Egypt, rather than those things that are of real and abiding value.

Now the foundation of all right living is truth. A life lived in harmony with truth will reveal itself in action; words will be subservient to deeds. And there will be the desire to let the truth shine upon every factor that makes up life. Falsehood will have no place when the subordination of self has been subdued; the desire for absolute truth will be consummated when the petition "not my will but Thy will be done" is believed and practised. We shall not, indeed, be satisfied until we attain Robert Leighton's standard—

"To perfect purity—if such could be—
This earth were all transparent, the dull clod—
Breathing the living God."

It is agreed by every well-ordered mind that the whole of a person's life should proceed along the line of self-development, along the line of truth—such an one will have a purpose in life, a well-directed aim. The more one thinks the more forcible the infinitude of truth appears. And we find truth in Christ. "All truth," says Phillips Brooks, "which we believe, we believe in and because of Christ." To thine own self be true should, therefore, be the watchword of our lives.

There is but one thing we have to fear—being untrue to our better selves,

and therefore untrue to God. If we follow the dictates of our better nature, and do the thing we know to be right, and say the thing we know to be true, all is well, for—

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe."

There is yet a wider field for truth, which should permeate life, and chase away falsehood as the day the night. In all the transactions of ordinary life truth should reveal itself. There should be the endeavour to act fairly, and not take advantage of any with whom we may have to deal. There we shall seek to exhibit those graces of which Saint Paul speaks.

J. C. WRIGHT.

U. H. M. C.

Our Church in the North of Ireland has good reason to be proud of its connection with the Unitarian Home Missionary College. Not only is the Principal, Dr. S. H. Mellone, an Irishman who for some years had charge of our church in Holywood, but the Rev. A. Gordon, whom he succeeded, though not a native of this country, was called from the charge of the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, to take up the duties of Principal of the College; and a further link has recently been forged by the appointment of the Rev. H. J. Rossington as Visitor to the Institution.

It is hoped, therefore, that the appeal which the College Committee has found it necessary to issue for increased support will meet with an adequate response here. A new Treasurer for Ireland has been appointed in the person of the Rev. M. Watkins, 4 Bathgate Drive, Belfast, who is naturally anxious that every effort should be made to relieve the financial burden under which the College is labouring. An additional £500 a year is required to carry on the work. It is hardly necessary to point out how essential it is that this work should continue if our ministers are to receive adequate equipment educationally for their duties.

Many an Irish student has benefited from the educational advantages offered by the U. H. M. C. The Rev. Herbert Barnes, whose recent removal to Newcastle-on-Tyne from Manchester, was the last of our fellow-countrymen to finish training there. The Revs. J. A. Kelly, R. M. King, J. A. Miskimmin, J. J. Magill, Thos. Munn, H. Warnock, and Wm. M'Mullan from this country, took their theological courses under its auspices, while the great majority of our ministers here in Ireland, whatever the country of their origin, were brought up by this Alma Mater. Mr. A. M. Bell is the only Irish student at present studying at the College; he has still to complete his training, and hopes to do so in June next year.

A WELL-WISHER.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme of instruction for 1920, issued by the Sunday School Committee of the N.S P.C.I.]

December 5th. Solomon's Dream. I Kings iii. 5-15.

Solomon celebrated his accession by a religious ceremony at Gibeon, the temple not being yet built at Jerusalem. "The great high place" means the chief place of sacrifice, a situation on a height being usually chosen for the purpose.

Many a young man finding himself king over a great people would be conceited and selfish, but Solomon felt his responsibilities too keenly for that.

Solomon's modesty. "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in." This is merely a confession of inexperience and refers to his ignorance of how to rule, rather than to his youth. We are not told Solomon's age at his accession, but he was certainly not a child in years, he was old enough to be married. Thanks to

the wise rule of David, the kingdom was now greater than it had been before, and Solomon feels the need of an understanding heart. Modesty generally accompanies true greatness. The following story is told of Cæsar Augustus, the Emperor of Rome. A senator was one day admiring the handsome buildings of Rome and thinking of how great a man the Emperor must be, when he saw a beggar sitting on the steps of the temple. "The Emperor is like a god above me; but then I am like a god above this beggar," said the senator as he stopped to give the beggar some money. As he drew nearer he saw that the beggar was the Emperor who was in the habit of dressing and living like a beggar one day each year so that he might not forget that he was a man like his subjects.

"An understanding heart." The prayer of Solomon was not exactly for wisdom, but for a receptive mind. If we think we know everything we shall never learn. The truly wise have receptive minds, they are made modest by their readiness to confess how much they do not know. Socrates and Newton are examples of this modesty and teachableness.

We have all, whether kings or not, to judge both people and what is right and wrong, and to do this wisely we must be modest, teachable and unselfish. The desire to be delivered from conceit, self-satisfaction, and selfishness (all this is involved in the prayer for an understanding heart) is better than the desire for fame or wealth.

December 12th. Solomon builds the Temple. I Kings vi.

It had been one of the dearest wishes of David's heart to build a temple to take the place of the tabernacle, but during his reign the country had been too unsettled and there was the further thought that the builder of the temple should be one whose hands were not stained with blood. David collected most of the material necessary and left to Solomon the actual building of the temple. Solomon undertook the task, not only from a sense of filial piety, but also because he shared his father's view. No expense was spared, and the workmen as well as Solomon were dedicated to their work and made a point of doing it thoroughly and well. The teacher should consult some Bible dictionary for a description of Solomon's temple, and should, if possible, show the class pictures and plans.

The following lessons may be drawn from the building of Solomon's temple.

1. The best that art and skill can do should be offered to God. 2. In all our work we should be as conscientious over that which cannot be seen as over what is clearly visible.

In the elder days of Art,
Builders wrought with greatest care
Each minute and unseen part;
For the Gods see everywhere.

3. Verses, 11-13. To be acceptable to God his temple must not only be well and beautifully built, but must be the outward and visible symbol of an inward spirit of obedience to God's commandments.

Solomon's temple was burned down by command of Nebuchadnezzar, in the year 586 B.C. (See II. Kings 25).

December 19th. Christmas Lesson. Luke ii. 1-20.

"There was no room for them in the inn." Mary and Joseph were not rich or important people, and so were sent off to the cattle shed.

1. A lowly birth did not prevent Jesus from becoming "the brightest and best of the sons of the morning." We should never disparage others or be discouraged with ourselves because of poor circumstances.

2. Like the busy people at Bethlehem we sometimes make no room in our lives for the gentle and beautiful spirit of Jesus. We should never be too busy or preoccupied to love one another.

3. As Jesus was born in a manger so His Spirit is often found where there are no advantages of wealth. Tell of

the poor cobbler in Tolstoy's story. "Where Love is, there God is."

The shepherds. In Matthew's Gospel we are told of the wise men adoring the infant Jesus, but Luke wishes us to understand that the spirit of Jesus makes its appeal equally to the simple-minded. It does not require great knowledge to appreciate the love and loyalty which Jesus taught and practised.

The Angels' song. A more accurate rendering would be, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth; peace among men of good will." Peace is the gift of Jesus to the world, peace among nations and peace between individuals. The way to peace is goodwill. At Christmas we have goodwill towards those about us, we give presents and wish each other a merry Christmas, and we find that this feeling makes Christmas a happy time. Christianity means keeping Christmas all the year round.

December 26th. Solomon dedicates the Temple. I Kings viii.

When the building of the temple was completed, a very impressive dedication service was held. First, the Ark of the covenant was brought to its new resting place borne by the priests, then the king himself addressed the vast congregation reminding them of the reasons for building the temple, and afterwards offered the prayer of dedication; finally, the dedicatory sacrifices were offered.

"There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone." On these two tables of stone were the ten commandments. It is significant that the first act of the dedication service should be the bringing of the ark with the commandments into the temple. The ten commandments were the basis of the religion of the temple. God would only be with them in their worship as long as the commandments were obeyed. Worship and conduct cannot be separated, they interact on each other.

"But will God in very deed dwell on the earth?" Solomon here rises to a more spiritual conception of God than had sometimes been held even by the Jews. The temple was not God's local habitation, for heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, but it was a point of contact between God and man. God is everywhere, nevertheless in a place of worship communion with God is more easy than elsewhere, for we come with mind and heart prepared.

"When thou hearest, forgive." The answer Solomon desired to his prayer was forgiveness of sins. Every prayer should seek this answer, for we cannot come into communion with God without being conscious of our shortcomings. Solomon further takes it for granted that those who come to the temple will do so because they repent. Only then can we hope to be forgiven.

"That all the peoples of the earth may know that the Lord, he is God." In vain are temples and churches built and dedicated unless they are to be "witness of divine things in all the world." Then, and then only, is a church fulfilling its proper function when it serves to remind us of the kingship of God.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—The Unity Guild entertained on Saturday, the 23rd October, about 90 workers from "The Workshops for Industrious Blind," in the Central Hall. A very substantial tea was served at 5 o'clock, which was generously contributed by some members of the Guild. This was followed by a short programme from some of the blind guests, in which the following took part:—The Misses T. M'Cully, N. Kane, M. Devine, Mrs. Higgins, and Mr. A. Hamill. There was also a programme from Guild members and friends, which, if we are to judge by the applause the performers received, must have been thoroughly enjoyed by the audience. Songs were rendered by Miss K. Montgomery, Mrs. Hay, Rev. M. Watkins, Mr. W. Cochrane; Recitations were given by Miss Agnes Hagan and three juvenile performers, the Misses

Nellie Gordon, Eileen Millar, and Mildred Martin; Mr. and Mrs. Butterworth were responsible for a Sketch, entitled: "Sir Peter and Lady Teazle;" Mrs. Hay, Miss Gordon and Mr. J. H. Smith acted as accompanists throughout the evening. At the conclusion of the programme a generous supply of fruit was handed round, which was also contributed by Guild members. On Wednesday, November 10th, in the Central Hall, Mr. J. H. Smith gave a very interesting Lecture Concert on "Handel," illustrated by musical items, which were contributed by The Misses Armstrong and Murray, Messrs. Wright, Linton and Croft. Mr. Butterworth acting as accompanist. The next meeting of the Guild will be held in York Street Hall, on Wednesday, December 8th, at 7-30 p.m. This being Ladies' Night, papers will be read by Miss Praeger and Mrs. Philipson.

* *

Clough.—Our Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Friday Evening and Sunday, October 22nd and 24th. The Church was beautifully decorated with flowers, fruit, vegetables and corn, by the ladies of the congregation. The Very Rev. G. L. Phelps, the Moderator, officiated on Friday Evening whose sermon was eloquent, impressive and highly appreciated by all present. Sunday services, morning and evening, were conducted by the Rev. J. D. Davies. The three services were well attended. The neighbouring churches suspended their evening services to give their members an opportunity to attend ours and join with us in giving thanks for the harvest. The singing was hearty. Mrs. John M'Cammon, Miss L. Irvine (Organist) and Mr. Bob Hogg, sang very appropriate solos, which added a great deal to the success of the services.

* *

Comber.—The Harvest Thanksgivi g Services in connection with this church were held on Sunday, October 31st. The preacher was the Rev. G. L. Phelps, of Holywood, who delivered able and inspiring sermons which were deeply appreciated. The weather was extremely stormy and the rain poured incessantly throughout the day. Nevertheless, there was a large congregation present at each service. The church was decorated in a very artistic manner, for which the ladies of the congregation deserve praise and thanks. Special music was rendered by the choir, the anthem, "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem," being beautifully sung. Collections were taken up on behalf of the Choir Funds.

The Young People's Society in connection with the above church opened the winter's series of meetings with a Social on Wednesday, November 17th. There was a splendid muster of the young people, and the proceedings were very hearty and enjoyable. The evening commenced with a Competition, entitled "A Search among the Ages." The winners of the ladies' prizes were Misses Adela M'Cormick and Margaret Niblock, and of the gent.'s prizes, Messrs. Harry M'Cormick and Jack Munn. An instrumental trio (piano, violin and cello), was very effectively rendered by Mrs. J. Miller Andrews, Maxwell Court, and her two young daughters, Misses Morie and Josephine Andrews. They were heartily encored, and they responded with another item beautifully played. Mrs. M'Kee, Miss Teggart and Mr. Taylor Barnes, contributed solos and all were enthusiastically received. The singing of all three was of a very high standard and the Young People's Society feel deeply grateful to them for their efficient help. Miss Smartt and Miss Murray presided in a praiseworthy manner at the piano. Miss Stewart and Miss Munn had charge of the programme. Miss R. Todd and Mrs. Davies presided at the Refreshment tables. A hearty vote of thanks was accorded to all who had contributed to the evening's enjoyment and the singing of the National Anthem brought the proceedings to a close.

* *

Crumlin.—The Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held here on Sunday 24th October. Rev. S. E. Bowen

officiated. As usual the church was tastefully decorated for the occasion. The morning service was not so well attended as in other years, but this was more than compensated by the large gathering that assembled in the evening, in spite of the fact that there were other Special Services in the village and neighbouring churches on the same date.

On Sunday, October 31st, the Annual Church Parade of the local lodge of the British Order Ancient Free Gardeners (Crimson Thorn Lodge, No. 475), was held in our Church. The weather was very unfavourable, nevertheless there was a large congregation. The "Belfast Telegraph" gave the following report: "The members of the lodge wearing regalia marched to the church, where the centre part had been reserved for them, and by kind permission they were allowed to place their new banner (unfurled the previous day) in a conspicuous part of the church. Rev. S. E. Bowen, in the course of an eloquent sermon, expressed his pleasure in addressing the members of the lodge, and reminded them of their duties as members of a society based on Christian principles. Miss Logan performed the duties of organist in a most capable manner."

* *

Downpatrick.—The Children's Club and Guild meets every Tuesday. A splendid lantern and full outfit has been bought and it is intended to have fortnightly exhibitions of slides. On Tuesday, October 16th, Mr. Philipson dealt with "the Life of St. Patrick," and had a good selection of slides illustrating his subject. There was an excellent attendance.

* *

Holywood.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, October 31st, when the Rev. J. Glynne Davies, of Comber, was the preacher. Unfortunately the weather was about as bad as it could be, but notwithstanding there were very good congregations. The church was very effectively decorated, and the singing of harvest hymns and anthem was excellent. On the following evening there was a Musical Service, at which Simper's harvest cantata, "The Rolling Seasons," was very finely rendered by an augmented choir, and an address given by the Rev. G. L. Phelps. There was again a good attendance, although not quite up to the usual numbers at these Monday evening services.

* *

Mountpottinger.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, October 17th, being conducted by the minister for the first time since he took charge of the congreagtion over four years ago. The Church had been tastefully decorated by willing hands, and large congregations were the order of the day. Under the direction of Mr. J. Russell, who took up the duties of Organist about three months ago, an augmented choir rendered good music, including several anthems. On the Monday night following a Musical Service was held, this being a new feature, and the attendance was sufficiently encouraging to warrant the experiment being renewed another year. After a period of over 15 years' service, Mr. S. Young has resigned his post as Sexton, owing to increasing years, and Mr. A. Lawther has been appointed in his stead. The half-yearly Communion Service was held on the first Sunday in November, when, from various causes, the attendance was not as large as for the May celebration. The congregation is under a debt of gratitude to those members of the Ladies' Sewing Society who have within recent weeks put in a lot of hard work in giving the Church and School a thorough autumn cleaning, thus making smooth the path of the newly-appointed Sexton and his wife. The special sub-committee appointed to consider designs, etc., in connection with the War Memorial Tablet has now completed its labours, and the work is about to be placed in the hands of the contractors. In this connection, it is but fair to mention the name of Mr. Harold Thomas who has done a lot

of work in ensuring the placing before the Committee of very full particulars to aid them in arriving at a decision.

* *

Larne and Kilwaughter.—Harvest Services were conducted here on 24th October, by Mr. A. L. Agnew, B.A., and were most admirable in every respect. There was no advertising unless *viva voce* from the pulpit, but as collections were to be taken up on behalf of "Larne Nursing Society," there was a fine muster of the congregation in the morning, while the name and fame in these parts of the youthful ex-soldier preacher attracted an immense assembly in the evening. At our Harvest Services there were a few tasteful decorations, suggestive of the bounty and glory of God, while a beautiful chaplet of laurel, constructed by the Misses Greenfield, reminded us of our brave lads who fell for the world's liberty and freedom. Miss Moore, of Larne Infant School, gave the exquisite flowers that adorned the Communion table. Special Harvest Hymns with Chant and Anthem were rendered effectively by the Choir under the leadership of Mr. Holmes, whose master-hand brought captivating harmonies from his richly toned organ, especially in his rendering of the melody "Dresden," by Schulz.

* *

Newry.—Harvest Thanksgiving Services were held on Sunday, October 24th, and continued on the following evening. The church was beautifully decorated, and the congregations at all the services were very satisfactory. The special preacher at the Sunday services was Rev. A. Whitford, Moneyrea; and the pastor loci., Rev. G. J. Slipper, conducted the Monday evening service, and gave an address on "The Religion of the grateful Heart." The choir was augmented for the occasion, several ladies and gentlemen from neighbouring churches giving their services. Th music was of a very highe standard. Mrs. Slipper presided at the organ. The anthems "O Lord, how manifold," and "The eyes of all wait upon Thee," were sung, the solo in the latter being taken by Miss Agnew. The collections were satisfactory, being a little above the average of former years.

* *

Raloo.—Harvest Services were held in the above church, on Sunday, the 7th November. There were exceptionally good attendances at both services. Many people were not able to find standing room at the evening service. The pastor loci conducted the morning service. The Rev. W. G. Marsden preached in the evening, and delivered a very appropriate and inspiring address, which was listened to with great attention and much appreciated. The praise part of the service was well rendered by an augmented choir, the singing was bright and hearty. Mrs. A. Moore presided at the harmonium with her usual good ability. The solo, "The Harvester's Night Song," was sweetly sung by Miss M'Clure. The decorations of flowers and fruits were artistically arranged by the young people of the choir. The motto "God is Love," made with white flowers on a green background and placed on the front of the pulpit, displayed credit on the part of the workers and was much admired by the congregations.

* *

Templepatrick.

A Congregational Meeting was held on Thursday evening, 30th September, in the Roughfort School-room, when it was decided that the congregation should hold a Bazaar in Templepatrick near the end of June, 1921. The reason for the undertaking is to raise funds for the necessary structural alterations, painting and repairs (required by the Commissioners of National Education) to the Roughfort National School; and for painting and repairs to Meeting House and Manse. There was a very good attendance, and the usual preliminary steps were taken to authorise a beginning and in the way of organisation. Rev. A. Turner, Templepatrick, was appointed Chairman of Committee; Mr. Archie Thompson, The Trench, Mallusk, Co. Antrim, was

appointed Hon. Secretary, and Mr. Harry Barnett, Roughfort, Templepatrick, Hon Treasurer.

Harvest Thanksgiving Service was held in this church on Sunday evening, 24th October. The weather was exceptionally fine and a splendid congregation assembled, filling the church to its utmost capacity. Rev. A. Turner conducted the service and preached the sermon. Miss Alexander sang finely "The King of Love my Shepherd is" (Gounod) and "Nearer my God to Thee" (Carey). The congregational singing of hymns was of the heartiest kind and many friends said how good it had been to be there. Miss Getty presided at the organ. The church as usual was decorated for the occasion.

BIRTHS.

On Wednesday, 20th October, at Downpatrick, to Mr. and Mrs. James M'Mullan, a son.

On 27th October, at Downpatrick, to Mr. and Mrs. Martin Saye, a daughter.

On 1st November, at Downpatrick, to Mr. and Mrs. John Killops, a son.

On 3rd November, at Downpatrick, to Mr. and Mrs. John Milligan, a son.

DEATHS.

Wm. Neill, on November 16th, at his residence, Downpatrick.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

LETTERS OF THEOPHILUS LINDSEY. By Herbert M'Lachlan, M.A., D.D. Longmans, Green & Co., 1920. 6s.

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